

15 Claims From Donald Trump's Speech to Conservatives, Fact Checked

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Highlight: The president mixed facts and falsehoods while talking about immigration, gun policy, trade, climate, taxes and other topics.

Body

President Trump addressed a range of policy issues, from tax cuts to gun policy to immigration, at Friday's annual meeting of the Conservative Political Action Conference. Below is a look at some of the facts and figures he cited that were accurate, false or could use some additional context.

"We have passed massive, biggest in history, tax cuts and reforms ... for 45 years nothing has been passed."

The \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts that Mr. Trump signed into law in December are not the largest in history. According a previous analysis in The New York Times, they amount to the 12th largest, as a share of the economy.

Also, Mr. Trump is not the first president in 45 years to enact tax cuts. Tax legislation was signed into law by Presidents Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Further, the cuts passed under Mr. Reagan and Mr. Obama were larger, as a share of the economy, than those recently signed by Mr. Trump.

"No president has ever cut so many regulations in their entire term as we have cut in less than a year."

Mr. Trump is the first president to label actions taken by federal agencies as deregulatory and regulatory, so it's a difficult comparison to make. Previous administrations have counted the number of regulations withdrawn from the federal registry. By that metric, Mr. Trump did not eliminate more in one year than his predecessors in their entire terms.

"We have massive energy reserves, we have coal, we have so much. And basically they say you can't use it."

Mr. Trump is referring to the Paris climate accord that his administration announced the United States was withdrawing from in June 2017.

Emissions reductions under the agreement are voluntary. So, contrary to Mr. Trump's claim, coal consumption in the United States would not have necessarily been affected.

"China, their agreement didn't kick in until 2030. Right. Our agreement kicks in immediately. Russia, they're allowed to go back into the 1990s, which was not a clean environmental time."

Under the Obama administration, the United States offered to cut emissions by 26 percent to 28 percent below 2005 levels, by 2025, as part of the Paris agreement.

China ratified the Paris agreement in September 2016. The country pledged to lower emissions after a projected peak level of emissions in 2030. But updated projections anticipate that peak will occur closer to 2020 as the

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Chinese government invests in renewable energy and halts production on cars that don't meet fuel efficiency standards.

Russia pledged to cut emissions by 25 to 30 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. That is rated "critically insufficient" by the Climate Action Tracker, which scores countries' pledges. Russia's economy had collapsed, causing emissions to drop rapidly, with the fall of the Soviet Union. So reducing emissions from the level reached in 1990 would still be an increase from Russia's emission levels today.

"Other countries, big countries, India, and others, we had to pay because they considered them a growing country."

Mr. Trump is likely referring to the Green Climate Fund, a United Nations program to help poorer countries mitigate the effects of climate change.

The voluntary program has been in place since 2013, and was not mandated under the Paris agreement. The United States pledged \$3 billion to the fund, but Mr. Trump halted contributions, with \$2 billion still outstanding. Developing countries, including Mexico, Indonesia and Mongolia, also are putting money into the fund.

"Companies are pouring back into this country, pouring back. Not like — when did you hear about car companies coming back into Michigan and coming to Ohio and expanding? You never heard that."

The Reshoring Initiative is an advocacy group that works with manufacturing companies to return jobs to the United States from overseas. Its website lists dozens of instances when car companies returned manufacturing jobs to the United States over the past decade. For example, Ford announced it would move production of pickup trucks from Mexico to Ohio in 2015, and General Motors said it would build a type of Cadillac in Tennessee instead of Mexico in 2014.

"We declined to certify the terrible one-sided Iran nuclear deal. It was a horrible deal. Whoever heard you give \$150 billion to a nation that has no respect for you whatsoever?"

The Iran nuclear deal released about \$100 billion — not \$150 billion — in previously frozen Iran assets; the United States did not cut Iran a check. Much of that money is also tied up in debt obligations. For example, \$20 billion is owed to China for financing projects in Iran. Estimates for the actual amount available to Iran range from \$35 billion to \$65 billion.

"You saw Apple just brought \$350 billion in."

Mr. Trump has previously claimed that Apple's \$350 billion investment is the direct result of his tax cuts. But Apple, according to reporting in The Times, "was already on track to spend \$275 billion over the next five years. After the \$38 billion tax payment is subtracted, that leaves its new investment at roughly \$37 billion over the next five years."

"They're not giving us their best people, folks. They're not giving us — use your heads. They're giving us — it is a lottery."

Mr. Trump is referring to the diversity visa lottery. But foreign governments do not select entrants; rather, millions of individuals enter of their own volition. A computer chooses winners at random and, before receiving a visa, those selected must undergo a screening process that bars criminals and the indigent. In fact, those who have been admitted through the program have higher rates of employment and of finding work in professional or managerial occupations than most other immigrants.

"This guy came in through chain migration. And a part of the lottery system. They say 22 people came in with him."

It is implausible that Sayfullo Saipov, the suspect in the October 2017 truck attack in Manhattan, enabled 22 to immigrate to the United States. He is a green card holder who immigrated to the United States in 2010 from Uzbekistan, married another Uzbek immigrant in 2013 in Ohio and fathered three children in the United States. Under current law, he is not eligible to sponsor any extended family to immigrate to the United States.

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"Jobs are at a record level. Jobs are so good. 2.7 million jobs created since the election."

Mr. Trump's figure is accurate, but about 600,000 of those jobs were added in the last four months of Mr. Obama's presidency. About 2.1 million jobs have been added since February 2017, Mr. Trump's first full month in office.

"African-American unemployment has reached the lowest level in our history."

This talking point needs an update. The unemployment rate for black Americans was 6.8 percent in December, the lowest since 1972, but it rose to 7.7 percent in January. It is worth noting that the rate has been in decline for several years and the gap between unemployment rates for white and black Americans remains high.

"Wages are rising for the first time in many, many years."

Wages have been rising for several years. In fact, wage growth in January 2018 was slower than what it was during the last few months of Mr. Obama's term, according to data from the Federal Reserve.

"Last year, we had almost a \$500 billion trade deficit with China ... we have \$100 billion deficit with Mexico."

In 2016, the United States had a net trade deficit of \$309 billion with China, and \$63 billion with Mexico.

There is not yet fully available public trade data for 2017. The United States had trade deficits of \$375 billion with China and \$71 billion with Mexico in goods alone. But the United States usually maintains a surplus in the trade of services with China and Mexico, so it's likely Mr. Trump's figures are off by billions of dollars.

"[MS-13] shouldn't be in our country. They were let in for years, they shouldn't be. And we're getting them out."

The gang known as MS-13 was formed in Los Angeles by refugees from El Salvador in the 1980s. The government began deporting its members in the mid-1990s, which helped the gang's leadership grow abroad.

PHOTO: President Trump speaking on Friday at the Conservative Political Action Conference in Maryland. The sanctions are intended to close a loophole in the effort to cut off North Korea's imports of oil and exports of coal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pete Marovich for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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